

H.R. 2297: Hezbollah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015

Section-By-Section

This bill broadens financial sector sanctions against Hezbollah, target its media appendage al-Manar, and forces other critical designations to undermine the terrorist organization's illicit activities.

Section 1. Short Title and Table of Contents. The Hezbollah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015.

Section 2. Statement of Policy. States that it shall be United States policy to use all available diplomatic, legislative and executive avenues to combat the global criminal activities of Hezbollah.

Title I—Prevention of Access by Hezbollah to International Financial and Other Institutions.

Section 101. Briefing on Imposition of Sanctions on Certain Satellite Providers that Carry al-Manar TV. Al-Manar (“the beacon”) is Hezbollah’s official television station, which promotes the full range of the group’s terrorist activities. Al-Manar, the Lebanese Communication Group, and the Lebanese Media Group have been sanctioned pursuant to Executive Order 13224, which prohibits persons from providing financial, material, or technological support for terrorist organizations. This section requires the Administration to brief Congress on the status of all satellite, internet and other providers that knowingly provide material support to al-Manar, and if a provider has not been sanctioned, explain why.

Section 102. Sanctions with Respect to Financial Institutions that Engage in Certain Transactions. Allows the Administration to pursue foreign banks that knowingly do business with entities that facilitate Hezbollah’s activities. Requires the Secretary of the Treasury to prohibit from the U.S. financial system, or impose severe limitations on, a foreign financial institution that engages in one of the specified transactions under this section, which include aiding transactions and money laundering for Hezbollah. Allows the President to waive the requirements of this section if the President determines that doing so is vital to the national security interests of the United States. Gives foreign financial institutions the opportunity to wind down or cease operations that would otherwise result in sanctions under this section.

Title II—Reports on Designation of Hezbollah as a Significant Foreign Narcotics Trafficker and a Significant Transnational Criminal Organization.

Section 201. Report on Designation of Hezbollah as a Significant Foreign Narcotics Trafficker. Requires the President, within 120 days of the bill’s enactment, to report to Congress on whether Hezbollah meets the criteria under the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act, and if not, specify what criteria has not been met. A “Kingpin Designation” under this Act would allow U.S. law enforcement to pursue Hezbollah operatives in countries that have not yet designated Hezbollah as a terrorist organization. *This section is based on language that Congress used to successfully compel the Executive Branch to designate the Haqqani Network a terrorist organization.*

Section 202. Report on Designation of Hezbollah as a Transnational Criminal Organization. Requires the President, within 120 days of the bill’s enactment, to report to Congress on whether Hezbollah meets the criteria set forth in Executive Order 13581. This would result in Hezbollah’s designation as a Transnational Criminal Organization, and would further empower U.S. law enforcement agencies to counter Hezbollah’s other criminal enterprises, including money laundering and the counterfeiting of goods and pharmaceuticals. *This section is based on language that Congress used to successfully compel the Executive Branch to designate the Haqqani Network a terrorist organization.*

Section 203. Rewards for Justice and Hezbollah’s Fundraising, Financing, and Money Laundering Activities. Requires the Administration to submit a one-time report that details actions taken by the Department of State through its rewards program to obtain information on Hezbollah’s fundraising, financing, and money laundering networks.

Section 204. Report on Activities of Foreign Governments to Disrupt Local Global Logistics Networks and Fundraising, Financing, and Money Laundering Activities of Hezbollah. Requires the Administration to submit a one-time report that provides a comprehensive overview of countries supporting Hezbollah, including those governments that are not taking adequate efforts to disrupt Hezbollah’s global logistics networks.

Section 205. Appropriate Congressional Committees Defined. Defines “appropriate congressional committees” in the House and Senate for purposes of this Act.

Title III—Miscellaneous Provisions.

Sec. 301. Rule of Construction. Provides that nothing in this Act shall apply to the authorized intelligence activities of the United States.

Sec. 302. Regulatory Authority. Requires the President to promulgate any necessary regulations for this Act’s implementation within 90 days of its enactment.

Sec. 303. Termination. Provides for this Act’s termination after the President certifies to Congress that Hezbollah is no longer designated as a foreign terrorist organization, and poses no significant threat to the United States or its allies.